

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
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R 081419Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8899
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 12611

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: ET UK SHUM
SUBJECT: ANGLO-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS

1. IN THE LAST TEN DAYS, HMG HAS HAD TWO EXCHANGES WITH ETHIOPIAN OFFICIALS WHICH HAVE HELPED DEFINE THE CURRENT STATE OF ANGLO-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS. IN THE FIRST INSTANCE, THE ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR HERE REQUESTED HMG TO BEGIN STAGE THREE OF A UK CARTOGRAPHIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM DESIGNED TO MAP ALL OF ETHIOPIA. AFTER SOME CONSIDERATION, THE UK REFUSED, INFORMING THE AMBASSADOR THAT THE PROGRAM WOULD NOT GO FORWARD UNTIL THERE HAD BEEN A CLEAR IMPROVEMENT IN HUMAN RIGHTS IN ETHIOPIA. WE UNDERSTAND A PARALLEL EXCHANGE TOOK PLACE IN ADDIS ABABA.

2. DESCRIBING THE ABOVE, FCO EAST AFRICA DEPARTMENT HEAD ALAN MUNRO SAID THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME HMG HAD
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DIRECTLY LINKED ASSISTANCE WITH HUMAN RIGHTS PERFORMANC IN ETHIOPIA. HE ALSO NOTED THAT THE AMBASSADOR, WHILE HARDLY EUPHORIC, DID NOT REACT ANGRILY AND SEEMED TO RECOGNIZE THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM AND THE BRITISH CRITICISM. THE AMBASSADOR CLAIMED THAT THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN ETHIOPIA IS IMPROVING AND SAID HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD RENEW THE REQUEST IN A FEW MONTHS. HE ALSO

STATED THAT MENGITSU HAD SPECIFICALLY CHARGED HIM TO LET THE BRITISH KNOW THAT ETHIOPIA DID NOT WANT TO RELY ENTIRELY ON THE EAST FOR ASSISTANCE AND WOULD PREFER A HALF-AND-HALF ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN EAST AND WEST.

3. IN THE SECOND INSTANCE, ETHIOPIAN OFFICIALS HERE AND IN ADDIS ABABA INQUIRED WHY ETHIOPIA HAD BEEN OMITTED FROM THE LIST OF COUNTRIES THAT WOULD BENEFIT FROM HMG'S PLAN TO WRITE OFF 900,000,000 POUNDS IN DEBT OWED BY DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. ASSISTANT UNDER SECRETAR MANSFIELD TOLD EMBASSY OFFICER THAT, WHILE ETHIOPIA'S DEBTS TO THE UK AMOUNTED TO LITTLE MORE THAN A FEW MILLION POUNDS, THE ADDIS GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN INFORMED IT WOULD BE CONSIDERED FOR RELIEF ONLY WHEN ITS HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD HAD IMPROVED.

4. COMMENT: WE PASS ON THE ABOVE NOT ONLY TO RECORD SPECIFIC ACTIONS IN BRITISH HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY BUT ALSO TO UNDERSCORE THE ETHIOPIAN REACTION. IN BOTH CASES THE ETHIOPIANS ACCEPTED BRITISH CRITICISM AND SEEMED ANXIOUS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS. WE FIND MENGITSU' HALF-AND-HALF REMARK A FURTHER INDICATION THAT THE DIRG MAY BE HAVING SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT AT LEAST SOME ASPECTS OF ITS CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH THE SOVIETS.

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